

## What does positive ageing mean?



ke to age

u3a have shared two new conversations with members and academics exploring positive ageing, how it can be embraced and what barriers prevent people from ageing positively.

Liz Ervine, u3a's Trustee for Scotland, and Sandi Rickerby, u3a's Trustee for the North East, were joined by academics, Dr Melanie Lovatt, Dr Alan Gow, Shelagh Young, Susan Murray and Dr Dwight Tse.

Alan Gow, Professor of Psychology at Heriot-Watt University, said: "I'm interested in how our lifestyles, behaviours and environments effect our brain health as we get older.

"The idea of positive ageing is, what can we do across our whole lives to build and maintain capacity to ensure we can continue to lead happy, positive, fulfilled lives as we get older?"

The panel discussed how confidence can be a barrier preventing people from taking positive steps that might help them to have a more fulfilling later life - like joining u3a or other social organisations.

Liz Ervine said: "We try to make sure the barriers are as small as possible – that it (u3a) doesn't cost much money, that the groups are held in an accessible place, and on a bus route.

'We try to do our very best to make sure as many people as possible can come along. The social aspect is really important, as well as the brain learning.'

Professor Gow discussed what he meant by the term 'interventions' and how they can aid positive ageing.

"An intervention might be, the kind of activities u3as do, either individually or in combination," said Professor Gow. "Learning a new topic, becoming adept in French, or learning about history or politics. They're working on mental engagement but they're often also being done in a social context. Some of the other activities might also have a more physical component." He said all these factors contribute to positive ageing.

Both conversations are available to watch on [the u3a YouTube channel](#).

This conversation is part of u3a's ongoing work to change the narrative around ageing. Find out more about this work on [Our Impact page](#).